

## APPENDIX 3

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Wagamon Pond Dam and Bridge (State Bridge Number 808)  
other names/site number State Bridge 808

### 2. Location

street & number Mulberry Street, crossing Broadkill River  
city, town Milton, Broadkill Hundred  
state Delaware code DE county Sussex code 005 zip code 19968

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources with Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> public- state	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	Contributing 1	Noncontributing 0 structures

Name of related multiple property listing: Milton Historic District  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Industry / manufacturing / mill dam Transportation (road related) / bridge	Transportation (road related) / bridge

### 7. Description

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The bridge is a reinforced concrete slab with a structure length of 23', two spans 10' in length and a deck width 24' out to out. The structure serves as both a bridge and as a dam/spillway for Wagamon's Pond. Under the bridge is a spillway, built into the earthen dam that retains the pond. Waste gates are built into the opening between the spillway and the bridge slab.

Adjustable wood plank gates attached to the bridge supports are raised or lowered within concrete tracks to control the volume of flow through the spillway. Guardrail parapets are designed with a series of open poured-concrete arches.

South of Bridge 808, a box culvert and wooden gates mark the location of the Wagamon Mill headrace. The arched decorative guardrail of the headrace bridge repeats the decorative motif of Bridge 808. A short distance upstream, on Diamond Pond, is yet another similar combination dam and waste gate structure built by the same owners at about the same time. Diamond Pond was once part of the same power system, providing upstream water storage for Wagamon's Mill.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Areas of Significance  
Artistic Value

Period of Significance  
1917

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

### *Combination dam and waste gate structures in Delaware*

Bridge 808 was erected in 1917, to replace a part of a hydraulic power system originally built in 1815 to drive a gristmill known most recently as Wagamon's Mill. The mill no longer stands, but the related hydraulic system survives. Bridge 808 is typical of the combination bridge and waste gate structures common throughout the two lower counties of Delaware.

State law required the counties to build and maintain bridges over mill dams at public expense. Because of the advantages conferred by this law, Delaware mill dams most frequently are associated with highway bridges. Virtually all the major streams in the region have been dammed at several points to power mills, and most of these dams incorporate bridge and control structures similar in function to Bridge 808.

Like Wagamon's Mill, many of the old water-powered mills have been destroyed or deactivated, leaving the dams, bridges, ponds, and waste gates in the highway system. Some of the former mill dams have been superseded by more modern structures as the ponds have been converted from power sources to recreational or conservation purposes.

### *History of the site*

The present [1815] dam, on which Bridge 808 stands, replaced Fergus' Bridge, known as the "upper" bridge or "old" bridge to distinguish it from the "lower" bridge at Union Street in the heart of Milton.

In 1815 a partnership led by Dr. Joseph Maull obtained an Act of the Delaware General Assembly authorizing construction of a mill dam at Fergus' Bridge. Dr. Maull died in 1846 while serving as acting Governor, and Samuel R. Paynter bought the mill, beginning his family's half-century association with the property. The Paynter heirs conveyed the mill property to John T., Hamilton K, and Daniel Wagamon by deed dated September 20, 1901.

Thereafter, the mill, pond, and dam were known as Wagamon's. In later years, the Wagamon family used the trade name "Diamond" to refer to the mill and its products. A short distance up stream is another dam, part of the same hydraulic system, which impounds a pond called Diamond Pond. Its bridge-and-dam structure is virtually identical to Bridge 808 and probably is contemporary.

The four-story Wagamon Mill was finished in 1901, equipped with the newest in Allis Chalmers turbine-driven roller equipment valued at \$5,600. It was thirty feet square, and stood back sixteen feet back from the raceway bridge. The building was later doubled by addition of a wing to the east. A few years later, Hamilton Wagamon and William Wagamon bought the other partner's shares and became co-owners of the mill. In 1917, they built the present penstock and waste gate systems and invited the county to pay for construction of the two new bridges, including Bridge 808.

The Levy Court [council] of Sussex County on May 22, 1917 agreed to build a superstructure with I-Beams and a reinforced concrete slab with two inch wearing surface of crushed stone in a bituminous binder. The resolution required that the county engineer review the plans and that a county inspector supervise the job. Both the penstock bridge and the waste gate bridge have continued in use, virtually unaltered, to the present. Since the raceway has been backfilled, the penstock bridge gate no longer functions.

After a fire, the original Wagamon Mill was replaced in 1944 by a new structure that used the 1917 power system. The sheriff sold the company's property in 1958 and the business closed. The mill itself changed hands in 1963. The new owner, Cool Spring Power and Water Company, did not operate the mill, but maintained the pond. Subsequently the property was conveyed to the State of Delaware, which developed the pond as a recreational facility.

The dam continues to serve as part of the highway system, as it has since 1815.

#### *Delaware State Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*

The property lies in the lower Peninsula / Cypress Swamp zone, as identified in the State Plan. The Coastal Zone begins a few yards to the east, at the historic head of navigation.

The existing dam was built in 1815, during a period called "early industrialization" that was marked in this area by significant increase of water-driven flour mills, saw mills, iron furnaces, and forges. The state plan does not mention gristmills in its discussion of the period in this zone. According to the plan, "survival rates for property types related to the Lower Peninsula / Cypress Swamp Zone, 1770-1830± are high and well known compared to earlier historic periods."

Bridge 808 was built in 1917, during a period identified in the state plan as the era of "Urbanization and Early Suburbanization," 1880-1940±. Cultural resources from this period have the highest survival rate, according to the State Plan. Flour milling is not identified in the state plan as a priority for this zone during this period. The plan does note, however, that "highway improvement meant new roads, resurfacing of old roads, and changing alignments." One of the improvements was Bridge 808.

#### *Application of the four National Register criteria*

In evaluating significance for purposes of the National Register, one must evaluate the property's level of integrity and then apply the four criteria.

Under criterion A, Bridge 808 and its associated structures could be considered for their association with flour milling. The bridge was built as an integral part of a milling complex. Flour milling is an important aspect of Delaware industrial history, but it is represented on the National Register by several similar sites that possess much higher levels of integrity.

The dam site could have significance under criterion B, sites associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Famous people have made their marks on the site. The dam's

builder was a governor of Delaware, and another governor proposed to build a transpeninsular canal through here. Major William Peery, a hero of the Revolution, probably was builder of the first river crossing here. However, nothing exists on the site that is directly connected to, or illustrative of, the careers of these people, whose careers are better illustrated by sites elsewhere in Milton.

The bridge first attracted attention because of the possibility that it might be a candidate under criterion C, sites that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values. In the Delaware Historic Bridges survey (Spero 1990), the bridge was cited as “an intact example of a combination bridge and water flow control structure, a relatively creative design solution to water management in lower Delaware.” Spero made no mention of the primary original function of these structures, which in each case was as the power source for a mill.

Bridge 808 was among the thirteen Delaware concrete slab bridges Spero evaluated as “significant” in the bridge survey. Of the thirteen, four were combination gate and bridge structures of this type, located on surviving mill dams. Other examples of this bridge type, not cited by Spero, are found on sites where the associated mill still exists.

Archæological aspects of a site ordinarily are evaluated under criterion D, sites that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. An archæological survey of the site concluded that the milling structure retains only a low level of integrity.

While milling was an important commercial activity during several periods in Delaware history, gristmills are heavily over-represented in the National Register, vastly out of proportion to their importance. It is difficult, therefore, to assign a high level of significance to any mill site that does not retain its integrity.

#### *Dam-bridge systems as a property type*

It has been suggested that Bridge 808 might be eligible for the National Register because it is a representative of a property type, under criterion C. Combination mill dams and bridges should be considered a property type, even though they are not listed in the state plan. In every case, they were part of a power system that also included a penstock bridge, a raceway, a pond, and a mill or mills.

State law required the county to build and maintain bridges wherever mill spillways were crossed by public roads. It was therefore in a miller's interest to build such combination structures. The 1917 Wagamons Pond bridges were but two of the many structures built to take advantage of this law.

Other Delaware examples of this property type retain a much greater level integrity and potential for preservation. One, Abbott's Mill, is owned and preserved by the State of Delaware as a public facility. The Hearn and Rawlins Mill in Seaford and the Wyoming Milling Company in Wyoming are privately-owned examples that retain all the major features of this property type.

Bridge 808 was never intended to exist in isolation. The other parts of the power system are integral parts of the structure's original “setting” in the sense of the National Register criteria. The integrity of this industrial setting was compromised by the loss of the mill, which was the *raison d'être* for any combination dam-bridge.

## Eligibility

The State Historic Preservation Officer has determined that the bridge structure is eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C, sites having high artistic value. This determination was based upon æsthetic considerations related to the the unusual decorative concrete simulated-arch treatment that is found in Bridge 808, and also in the penstock bridge at the opposite end of the dam, and in the Diamond Pond bridge. No other examples of this particular motif are known to survive.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Ames, David L., Mary Helen Callahan, Bernard L. Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders  
1989       *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.*
- Custer, Jay  
1986       A management plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Cultural Resources. *University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research Monograph No. 2.*
- Heite, Edward Francis.  
1990       *Report of Phase I and Phase II cultural resource surveys at Wagamon's Pond Dam. Bridge 808, Mulberry Street, Milton, Broadkill Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware.* Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series. Dover: Delaware Department of Transportation.
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1986       *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: Historic Contexts.*
- Moore, Thomas Tyler.  
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- Spero, P. A. C. and Company  
1990       *A Survey and Evaluation of Delaware Historic Bridges for Delaware Department of Transportation.*
- Sussex County Levy Court  
1917       Delaware Archives Record Group 4200, Levy Court of Sussex County. Minute Book 1915-1918, resolution regarding Wagamon and Company, May 22, 1917, p. 264.

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of property: less than one

UTM References

18	472,780	4,291,895
Zone	Easting	Northing

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Verbal boundary Description

The nominated property consists of a bridge and a spillway, with associated structures, resting on an earthen dam. The structure is 24 feet long and is bounded on the north and south by the earthen dam, on the west by the pond, and on the east by the tidal waters of Broadkill River.

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Boundary Justification

The boundaries are those of the structure itself, exclusive of the underlying dam, the headrace, and the mill site that were associated with it. Since the bridge is being considered in isolation, none of these other features of the system are included within the boundaries.

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Form Prepared By

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